

Your Holiness,

Our first word must be one of deep appreciation to you for your hospitality today and for your willingness to meet with those of us who have been asked to be members of the Anglican/Roman Catholic Working Group. We are grateful to you and the Archbishop of Canterbury for the initiative taken in establishing this group. Thank you for your concern and desire that, as churches, we should continue to work together for that unity which we know is the purpose, the longing and the will of God for His church, and to do apart only, what at this stage, is impossible to do together.

Your Holiness, in your Encyclical Letter, *Ut Unum Sint*, you wrote :

“To believe in Christ means to desire unity; to desire unity means to desire the church; to desire the church means to desire the communion of grace which corresponds to the Father’s plan from all eternity.”

And so we strive for unity because of our belief in Christ and our deep desire to bring the church to that state of unity which is Christ’s will. We hold before us a vision of Christ’s church united in its support of the faithful that they may hear more clearly the voice of Christ through our worship, our witness and our service as they struggle with the many competing voices of our day.

We must also be acutely aware of the need to address the issues of our world with one voice, despite our differences real as they are. We acknowledge the truth of those present differences, which we seek in love to respect in one another, however painful. It is our earnest hope that they will not prevent us from responding to this deep desire that there is for a greater unity within Christ's church and to a world that is calling for the church to speak out with one voice on issues such as warfare, violence in all its many forms,

globalisation, poverty, Aids, human relationships and the respect for human life, to name just a few.

We believe that God desires that His church, the body of Christ on earth now, should incarnate His compassion, His desire for justice and His condemnation of all that oppresses and robs people of their human dignity. We believe that He asks us to speak with His voice – in humility, but without fear or favour - to the rulers of the nations and those in high places. It is our conviction that He has made us His instruments of love, grace and truth, to be His messengers of peace in a world of strife, and messengers of strife in a world of false peace. We are anxious as a working group to ensure that we are able to work together to show the unity that is possible at present, in as many areas of our life as possible. In doing so we long to bring hope to our world in all its brokenness and suffering, the world which Christ loves and for which He died, and over which He still weeps because it does not know the things that belong to its peace. We hope that this Anglican/Roman Catholic Working Group established by Your Holiness and the Archbishop of Canterbury will enable our churches to speak with that one clear and authoritative voice to the countless ordinary men and women whose daily lives are so affected and diminished by some of the issues of which we have spoken. It is our hope that together we may proclaim, with ever greater faith and conviction that the reign of God is near, that the values of His kingdom will, one day, transfigure the life of the world and renew the face of His creation. It is our prayer that God will so inspire us in our search for a common mind and heart in these matters, that we will truly be able to speak with one voice in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

We ask therefore that Your Holiness will give us your blessing on all the work that we seek to do as the Anglican/Roman Catholic Working Group in the name of the one God, and Father of us all.